POEMS OF SENTIMENT

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ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

POEMS OF SENTIMENT

BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

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POEMS OF SENTIMENT

BY

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

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POEMS OF SENTIMENT

DOUBLE CARNATIONS

WILD Pink nestled in a garden bed,
A rich Carnation flourished high above her,
One day he chanced to see her pretty head
And leaned and looked again, and grew to love her.

The Moss (her humble mother) saw with fear
The ardent glances of the princely stranger;
With many an anxious thought and dewy tear
She sought to hide her darling from this danger.

The gardener-guardian of this noble bud
A cruel trellis interposed between them.
No common Pink should mate with royal blood,
He said, and sought in every way to wean them.

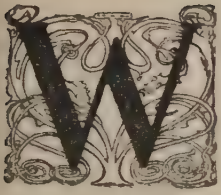
The poor Pink pined and faded day by day:
Her restless lover from his prison bower
Called in a priestly bee who passed that way,
And sent a message to the sorrowing flower.

The fainting Pink wept as the bee drew near,
Droning his prayers, and begged him to confess her.
Her weary mother, over-taxed by fear,
Slept, while the priest leaned low to shrive and bless her.

But lo! ere long the tale went creeping out,
The rich Carnation and the Pink were married!
The cunning bee had brought the thing about
While Mamma Moss in Slumber's arms had tarried.

And proud descendants of that loving pair,
The offspring of that true and ardent passion,
Are famous for their beauty everywhere,
And leaders in the floral world of fashion.

NEVER MIND



HATEVER your work and whatever its worth,
No matter how strong or clever,
Some one will sneer if you pause to hear,
And scoff at your best endeavour.
For the target art has a broad expanse,
And wherever you chance to hit it,
Though close be your aim to the bull's-eye fame,
There are those who will never admit it.

Though the house applauds while the artist plays,
And a smiling world adores him,
Somebody is there with an ennuied air
To say that the acting bores him.
For the tower of art has a lofty spire,
With many a stair and landing,
And those who climb seem small oft-time
To one at the bottom standing.

So work along in your chosen niche
With a steady purpose to nerve you ;
Let nothing men say who pass your way
Relax your courage or swerve you.
The idle will flock by the Temple of Art
For just the pleasure of gazing ;
But climb to the top and do not stop,
Though they may not all be praising.

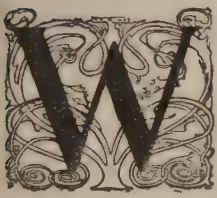
TWO WOMEN

KNOW two women, and one is chaste
And cold as the snows on a winter waste,
Stainless ever in act and thought
(As a man, born dumb, in speech errs not).
But she has malice toward her kind,
A cruel tongue and a jealous mind.
Void of pity and full of greed,
She judges the world by her narrow creed;
A brewer of quarrels, a breeder of hate,
Yet she holds the key to "Society's" Gate.

The other woman, with heart of flame,
Went mad for a love that marred her name:
And out of the grave of her murdered faith
She rose like a soul that has passed through death.
Her aims are noble, her pity so broad,
It covers the world like the mercy of God.

A soother of discord, a healer of woes,
Peace follows her footsteps wherever she goes.
The worthier life of the two, no doubt,
And yet "Society" locks her out.

IT ALL WILL COME OUT RIGHT

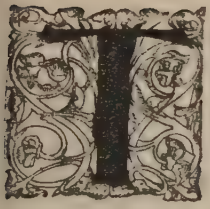


HATEVER is a cruel wrong,
Whatever is unjust,
The honest years that speed along
Will trample in the dust.
In restless youth I railed at fate
With all my puny might,
But now I know if I but wait
It all will come out right.

Though Vice may don the judge's gown
And play the censor's part,
And Fact be cowed by Falsehood's frown
And Nature ruled by art;
Though Labour toils through blinding tears
And idle Wealth is might,
I know the honest, earnest years
Will bring it all out right.

Though poor and loveless creeds may pass
For pure religion's gold ;
Though ignorance may rule the mass
While truth meets glances cold,
I know a law complete, sublime,
Controls us with its might,
And in God's own appointed time
It all will come out right.

A WARNING



HERE was a flame, oh! such a tiny flame—
One fleeting hour had spanned its birth and death,
But for a silly child with playful breath
Who fanned it into fury. It became
A mighty conflagration. Ah, the cost!
House, home, and thoughtless child alike were lost.

Lady beware. Fan not the harmless glow
Of admiration into ardent love,
Lean not with red curled smiling lips above
The flickering spark of sinless flame, and blow,
Lest in the sudden waking of desire
Thou, like the child, shalt perish in the fire.

SHRINES

BOUT a holy shrine or sacred place,
Where many hearts have bowed in earnest prayer,
The loveliest spirits congregate from space,
And bring their sweet, uplifting influence there.

If in your chamber you pray oft and well,
Soon will these angel-messengers arrive
And make their home with you, and where they dwell
All worthy toil and purposes shall thrive.

I know a humble, plainly furnished room,
So thronged with presences serene and bright,
The heaviest heart therein forgets its gloom
As in some gorgeous temple filled with light.

Those heavenly spirits, beauteous and divine,
Live only in an atmosphere of prayer;
Make for yourself a sacred, fervent shrine,
And you will find them swiftly flocking there.

THE WATCHER

HE gave her soul and body for a carriage,
And liveried lackey with a vacant grin,
And all the rest—house, lands—and called it marriage:
The bargain made, a husband was thrown in.

And now, despite her luxury, she's faded,
Gone is the bloom that was so fresh and bright;
She has the dark-rimmed eye, the countenance jaded,
Of one who watches with the sick at night.

Ah, heaven, she does! her sick heart, sick and dying,
Beyond the aid of human skill to save,
In that cold room her breast is hourly lying,
And her grim thoughts crowd near to dig its grave.

And yet it lingers, suffering and wailing,
As sick hearts will that feed upon despair
And that lone watcher, unrelieved, is paling
With vigils that no pitying soul can share.

Ah, lady! it is hardly what you thought it,
This life of luxury and social power;
You gave yourself as principal, and bought it,
But God extracts the interest hour by hour.

SWIMMING SONG

AM coming, coming to thee,
My strong-armed lover, the Sea!
On thy great broad breast I will lie and rest,
And thou shalt talk to me.

I have come to thee, all unsought,
I have stolen an hour from thought,
And peace and power thou canst give in that hour,
Which thy rival Earth gives not.

Alone here, under the sky,
And the whole world drifting by!
Thy breast of brine thrills close to mine,
While the cloudless sun sails high.

I fly, but thou givest chase—
Thy kisses are on my face!
Be bold and free as thou wilt, O Sea,
There is life in thy close embrace.

Throat and cheek and tress
Are damp where thy salt lips press!
There is strength and bliss in thy daring kiss,
And joy in thy bold caress.

And what is the Earth to me!
I have left it all, O Sea!
With its dust and soil and strife and toil,
For one glad hour with thee.

THE LAW

HE sun may be clouded, yet ever the sun
Will sweep on its course till the cycle is run.
And when into chaos the systems are hurled,
Again shall the Builder reshape a new world.

Your path may be clouded, uncertain your goal;
Move on, for the orbit is fixed for your soul.
And though it may lead into darkness of night,
The torch of the Builder shall give it new light.

You were, and you will be: know this while you are.
Your spirit has travelled both long and afar.
It came from the Source, to the Source it returns;
The spark that was lighted, eternally burns.

It slept in the jewel, it leaped in the wave,
It roamed in the forest, it rose in the grave,
It took on strange garbs for long æons of years,
And now in the soul of yourself it appears.

From body to body your spirit speeds on;
It seeks a new form when the old one is gone;
And the form that it finds is the fabric you wrought
On the loom of the mind, with the fibre of thought.

As dew is drawn upward, in rain to descend,
Your thoughts drift away and in destiny blend.
You cannot escape them; or petty, or great,
Or evil, or noble, they fashion your fate.

Somewhere on some planet, sometime and somehow,
Your life will reflect all the thoughts of your now.
The law is unerring; no blood can atone;
The structure you rear you must live in alone.

From cycle to cycle, through time and through space,
Your lives with your longings will ever keep pace.
And all that you ask for, and all you desire,
Must come at your bidding, as flames out of fire.

Once list to that voice and all tumult is done,
Your life is the life of the Infinite One;
In the hurrying race you are conscious of pause,
With love for the purpose and love for the cause.

You are your own devil, you are your own God,
You fashioned the paths that your footsteps have trod;
And no one can save you from error or sin,
Until you shall hark to the Spirit within.

LOVE, TIME, AND WILL

SOUL immortal, Time, God everywhere,
Without, within—how can a heart despair,
Or talk of failure, obstacles, and doubt?
(What proofs of God? The little seeds that sprout,
Life, and the solar system, and their laws.
Nature? Ah, yes; but what was Nature's cause?)

All mighty words are short: God, life, and death,
War, peace, and truth, are uttered in a breath.
And briefly said are love, and will, and time;
Yet in them lies a majesty sublime.

Love is the vast constructive power of space;
Time is the hour which calls it into place;
Will is the means of using time and love,
And bringing forth the heart's desires thereof.

The way is love, the time is now, and will
The patient method. Let this knowledge fill
Thy consciousness, and fate and circumstance,
Environment, and all the ills of chance
Must yield before the concentrated might
Of those three words, as shadows yield to light.

Go, charge thyself with love; be infinite
And opulent with thy large use of it:
'Tis from free sowing that full harvest springs;
Love God and life and all created things.

Learn time's great value; to this mandate bow,
The hour of opportunity is Now,
And from thy will, as from a well-strung bow,
Let the swift arrows of thy wishes go.
Though sent into the distance and the dark,
The dawn shall prove thy arrows hit the mark.

THE TWO AGES

N great cathedral window I have seen
A summer sunset swoon and sink away,
Lost in the splendours of immortal art.
Angels and saints and all the heavenly hosts,
With smiles undimmed by half a thousand years,
From wall and niche have met my lifted gaze.
Sculpture and carving and illumined page,
And the fair, lofty dreams of architects,
That speak of beauty to the centuries—
All these have fed me with divine repasts.
Yet in my mouth is left a bitter taste,
The taste of blood that stained that age of art.

Those glorious windows shine upon the black
And hideous structure of the guillotine;
Beside the haloed countenance of saints
There hangs the multiple and knotted lash.

The Christ of love, benign and beautiful,
Looks at the torture-rack, by hate conceived
And bigotry sustained. The prison cell,
With blood-stained walls, where starving men went mad,
Lies under turrets matchless in their grace.

God, what an age! How was it that You let
Colossal genius and colossal crime
Walk for a hundred years across the earth,
Like giant twins? How was it then that men,
Conceiving such vast beauty for the world,
And such large hopes of heaven, could entertain
Such hellish projects for their fellow-men?
How could the hand that, with consummate skill
And loving patience, limned the luminous page,
Drop pen and brush, and seize the branding-rod,
To scourge a brother for his differing faith?

Not great this age in beauty or in art;
Nothing is wrought to-day that shall endure,
For earth's adornment, through long centuries.
Not ours the fervid worship of a God
That wastes its splendid opulence on glass,
Leaving but hate, to give it mortal kin.
Yet great this age: its mighty work is man
Knowing himself, the universal life.

And great our faith, which shows itself in works
For human freedom and for racial good.
The true religion lies in being kind.
No age is greater than its faith is broad.
Through liberty and love men climb to God.

COULEUR DE ROSE

WANT more lives in which to love
This world so full of beauty,
I want more days to use the ways
I know of doing duty;
I ask no greater joy than this
(So much I am life's lover),
When I reach age to turn the page
And read the story over.
(O love, stay near!)

O rapturous promise of the Spring!
O June fulfilling after!
If Autumns sigh, when Summers die,
'Tis drowned in Winter's laughter.
O maiden dawns, O wifely noons,
O siren sweet, sweet nights,
I'd want no heaven could earth be given
Again with its delights
(If love stayed near).

There are such glories for the eye,
Such pleasures for the ear,
The senses reel with all they feel
And see and taste and hear;

There are such ways of doing good,
  Such ways of being kind,
And bread that's cast on waters fast
  Comes home again, I find.
  (O love, stay near.)

There are such royal souls to know,
  There is so much to learn,
While secrets rest in Nature's breast
  And unnamed stars still burn.
God toiled six days to make this earth,
  I think the good folks say—
Six lives we need to give full meed
  Of praise—one for each day
  (If love stay near).

But oh! if love fled far away,
  Or veiled his face from me,
One life too much, why then were such
  A life as this would be.
With sullen May and blighted June,
  Blurred dawn and haggard night,
This dear old world in space were hurled
  If love lent not his light.
  (O love, stay near!)

LAST LOVE

HE first flower of the spring is not so fair
Or bright as one the ripe mid-summer brings.
The first faint note the forest warbler sings
Is not as rich with feeling, or so rare
As when, full master of his art, the air
Drowns in the liquid sea of song he flings
Like silver spray from beak, and breast, and wings.
The artist's earliest effort, wrought with care,
The bard's first ballad, written in his tears,
Set by his later toil, seems poor and tame,
And into nothing dwindles at the test.
So with the passions of maturer years.
Let those who will demand the first fond flame,
Give me the heart's *last love*, for that is best.

LIFE'S TRACK

HIS game of life is a dangerous play,
Each human soul must watch alway,
From the first to the very last.
I care not however strong and pure—
Let no man say he is perfectly sure
The dangerous reefs are past.

For many a rock may lurk near by,
That never is seen when the tide is high—
Let no man dare to boast,
When the hand is full of trumps—beware,
For that is the time when thought and care
And nerve are needed most.

As the oldest jockey knows to his cost,
Full many a well-run race is lost
A brief half length from the wire.
And many a soul that has fought with sin,
And gained each battle, at last gives in
To sudden, fierce desire.

And vain seems the effort of spur and whip,
Or the hoarse, hot cry of the pallid lip,
When once we have fallen back.
It is better to keep on stirrup and rein,
The steady poise and the careful strain,
In speeding along Life's track.

A watchful eye and a strong, true hand
Will carry us under the Judge's stand,
If prayer, too, does its part;
And little by little the struggling soul
Will grow and strengthen and gain control
Over the passionate heart.

AN ODE TO TIME

O ! sportsman Time, whose chargers fleet
The moments, madly driven,
Beat in the dust beneath their feet
Sweet hopes that years have given ;
Turn, turn aside those reckless steeds,
Oh ! do not urge them my way ;
There's nothing that Time wants or needs
In this contented by-way.

You have down-trodden, in your race,
So much that proves your power,
Why not avoid my humble place ?
Why rob me of my dower ?
With your vast cellars, cavern deep,
Packed tier on tier with treasures,
You would not miss them should I *keep*
My little store of pleasures.

As one who, frightened, flying, flings
  Her riches down at random,
Your course is paved with precious things
  Life casts before your tandem:
The warrior's fame, the conqueror's crown,
  Great creeds for ages cherished,
Beneath your chariot-wheels were thrown,
  And, crushed to earth, they perished.

Although to just and generous deeds
  Your heart is not a stranger,
I have the feeling that one needs
  To guard his wealth from danger.
And though a most heroic light
  Oft on your pathway lingers,
I'd hide my treasures, if I might,
  From contact with your fingers.

You are the loyal friend of Truth,
  Go seek her, make her stronger,
And leave the remnant of my youth
  To me a little longer.
There's work enough for you before
  Eternity shall wed you:
Why stoop to steal my simple store?
  Why make me shun and dread you?

You do not need my joys, I say,
Home, love, and friends united—
I beg you turn and go the way
Where wrong waits to be righted;
Or pause, and let us chat a while:
I'll listen—not too near you,
For oh! no matter how you smile,
I fear you, Time, I fear you!

REGRET AND REMORSE

EGRET with streaming eyes doth seem alway
A maiden widowed on her wedding day.

While dark Remorse, with eyes too sad for tears,
A crushed, desponding Magdalene appears.

One, with a hungering heart unsatisfied,
Mourns for imagined joys that were denied.

The other, pierced by recollected sin,
Broods o'er the scars of pleasures that have been.

EASTER MORN

TRUTH that has long lain buried
At Superstition's door,
I see, in the dawn uprising
In all its strength once more.

Hidden away in the darkness,
By Ignorance crucified,
Crushed under stones of dogmas—
Yet lo! it has not died.

It stands in the light transfigured,
It speaks from the heights above,
"*Each soul is its own redeemer;*
There is no law but Love."

And the spirits of men are gladdened
As they welcome this Truth re-born
With its feet on the grave of Error
And its eyes to the Easter Morn.

BLIND

HATEVER a man may think or feel
He can tell to the world and it hears aright;
But it bids the woman conceal, conceal,
And woe to the thoughts that at last ignite.
She may serve up gossip or dwell on fashion,
Or play the critic with speech unkind,
But alas for the woman who speaks with passion!
For the world is blind—for the world is blind.

It is woman who sits with her starved desire,
And drinks to sorrow in cups of tears;
She reads by the light of her soul on fire
The secrets of love through lonely years:
But out of all she has felt or heard
Or read by the glow of her soul's white flame,
If she dare but utter aloud one word—
How the world cries shame!—how the world cries shame!

It cannot distinguish between the glow
Of a gleaming star, in the sky of gold,
Or a spent cigar in the dust below—
'Twixt unclad Eve or a wanton bold;
And ever if woman speaks what she feels
(And feels consistent with God's great plan)
It has cast her under its juggernaut wheels,
Since the world began—since the world began.

THE YELLOW-COVERED ALMANAC

I LEFT the farm when mother died and changed my place of dwelling
To daughter Susie's stylish house right on the city street:
And there was them before I came that sort of scared me, telling
How I would find the town folks' ways so difficult to meet;
They said I'd have no comfort in the rustling, fixed-up throng,
And I'd have to wear stifi collars every week-day, right along.

I find I take to city ways just like a duck to water;
I like the racket and the noise and never tire of shows;
And there's no end of comfort in the mansion of my daughter,
And everything is right at hand and money freely flows;

And hired help is all about, just listenin' to my call—
But I miss the yellow almanac off my old kitchen wall.

The house is full of calendars from attic to the cellar,
They're painted in all colours and are fancy like to see,
But in this one particular I'm not a modern feller,
And the yellow-coloured almanac is good enough for me.
I'm used to it, I've seen it round from boyhood to old age,
And I rather like the jokin' at the bottom of the page.

I like the way its "S" stood out to show the week's beginning,
(In these new-fangled calendars the days seem sort of mixed),
And the man upon the cover, though he wa'n't exactly winnin',
With lungs and liver all exposed, still showed how we are fixed;
And the letters and credentials that was writ to Mr. Ayer
I've often on a rainy day found readin' pretty fair.

I tried to buy one recently ; there wa'n't none in the city !
They toted out great calendars, in every shape and style.
I looked at 'em in cold disdain, and answered 'em in pity—
"I'd rather have my almanac than all that costly pile."
And though I take to city life, I'm lonesome after all
For that old yellow almanac upon my kitchen wall.

THE LITTLE WHITE HEARSE

OMEBODY'S baby was buried to-day—
The empty white hearse from the grave rumbled back,
And the morning somehow seemed less smiling and gay
As I paused on the walk while it crossed on its way,
And a shadow seemed drawn o'er the sun's golden track.

Somebody's baby was laid out to rest,
White as a snowdrop, and fair to behold,
And the soft little hands were crossed over the breast,
And those hands and the lips and the eyelids were pressed
With kisses as hot as the eyelids were cold.

Somebody saw it go out of her sight,
Under the coffin lid—out through the door;
Somebody finds only darkness and blight
All through the glory of summer-sun light;
Somebody's baby will waken no more.

Somebody's sorrow is making me weep:
I know not her name, but I echo her cry,
For the dearly bought baby she longed so to keep,
The baby that rode to its long-lasting sleep
In the little white hearse that went rumbling by.

I know not her name, but her sorrow I know;
While I paused on the crossing I lived it once more,
And back to my heart surged that river of woe
That but in the breast of a mother can flow;
For the little white hearse has been, too, at *my* door.

REALISATION

(At the Old Homestead)

TREAD the paths of earlier times
Where all my steps were set to rhymes.

I gaze on scenes I used to see
When dreaming of a vague To be.

I walk in ways made bright of old
By hopes youth-limned in hues of gold.

But lo! those hopes of future bliss
Seem dull beside the joy that *is*.

My noonday skies are far more bright
Than those dreamed of in morning's light,

And life gives me more joys to hold
Than all it promised me of old.

SUCCESS

S we gaze up life's slope, as we gaze
In the morn, ere the dewdrops are dry,
What splendour hangs over the ways,
What glory gleams there in the sky,
What pleasures seem waiting us, high
On the peak of that beauteous slope,
What rainbow-hued colours of hope,
As we gaze!

As we climb up the hill, as we climb,
Our hearts, our illusions, are rent:
For Fate, who is spouse of old Time,
Is jealous of youth and content.
With brows that are brooding and bent
She shadows our sunlight of gold,
And the way grows lonely and cold
As we climb

As we toil on, through trouble and pain,
  There are hands that will shelter and feed;
But once let us dare to *attain*—
  They will bruise our bare hearts till they bleed.
  'Tis the worst of all crimes to succeed,
Know this as ye feast on a crust,
Know this in the darkness and dust,
                Ye who climb.

As we stand on the heights of success,
  Lo! success seems as sad as defeat!
Through the lives we may succour and bless
  Alone may its bitter turn sweet!
  And the world lying there at our feet,
With its cavilling praise and its sneer,
We must pity, condone, but not hear,
                Where we stand.

As we live on those heights, we must live
  With the courage and pride of a god;
For the world, it has nothing to give
  But the scourge of the lash and the rod.
  Our thoughts must be noble and broad,
Our purpose must challenge men's gaze,
While we seek not their blame or their praise
                As we live.

THE LADY AND THE DAME

O, thou hast the art, good dame, thou swearest,
To keep Time's perishing touch at bay
From the roseate splendour of the cheek so tender,
And the silver threads from the gold away.
And the tell-tale years that have hurried by us
Shall tip-toe back, and, with kind good-will,
They shall take the traces from off our faces,
If we will trust to thy magic skill.

Thou speakest fairly; but if I listen
And buy thy secret, and prove its truth,
Hast thou the potion and magic lotion
To give me also the *heart* of youth?
With the cheek of rose and the eye of beauty,
And the lustrous looks of life's lost prime,
Wilt thou bring thronging each hope and longing
That made the glory of that dead Time?

When the sap in the trees sets young buds bursting,
And the song of the birds fills the air like spray,
Will rivers of feeling come once more stealing
From the beautiful hills of the far-away?
Wilt thou demolish the tower of reason,
And fling for ever down into the dust
The caution time brought me, the lessons life taught me,
And put in their places my old sweet trust?

If Time's foot-print from my brow is driven,
Canst thou, too, take with thy subtle powers
The burden of thinking, and let me go drinking
The careless pleasures of youth's bright hours?
If silver threads from my tresses vanish,
If a glow once more in my pale cheek gleams,
Wilt thou slay duty and give back the beauty
Of days untroubled by aught but dreams?

When the soft fair arms of the siren Summer
Encircle the earth in their languorous fold,
Will vast, deep oceans of sweet emotions
Surge through my veins as they surged of old?
Canst thou bring back from a day long-vanished
The leaping pulse and the boundless aim?
I will pay thee double, for all thy trouble,
If thou wilt restore all these, good dame.

HEAVEN AND HELL

HILE forced to dwell apart from thy dear face,
Love, robed like sorrow, led me by the hand
And taught my doubting heart to understand
That which has puzzled all the human race.
Full many a sage has questioned where in space
Those counter worlds were? where the mystic strand
That separates them? I have found each land,
And Hell is vast, and Heaven a narrow space.

In the small compass of thy clasping arms,
In reach and sight of thy dear lips and eyes,
There, there for me the joy of Heaven lies.
Outside, lo! chaos, terrors' wild alarms,
And all the desolation fierce and fell
Of void and aching nothingness, makes Hell.

LOVE'S SUPREMACY

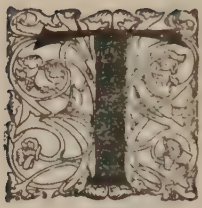
S yon great Sun in his supreme condition
Absorbs small worlds and makes them all his own,
So does my love absorb each vain ambition,
Each outside purpose which my life has known.
Stars cannot shine so near that vast orb'd splendour;
They are content to feed his flames of fire:
And so my heart is satisfied to render
Its strength, its all, to meet thy strong desire.

As in a forest when dead leaves are falling
From all save some perennial green tree,
So one by one I find all pleasures palling
That are not linked with or enjoyed by thee.
And all the homage that the world may proffer,
I take as perfumed oils or incense sweet,
And think of it as one thing more to offer,
And sacrifice to Love, at thy dear feet.

I love myself because thou art my lover,
My name seems dear since uttered by thy voice;
Yet, argus-eyed, I watch and would discover
Each blemish in the object of thy choice.
I coldly sit in judgment on each error,
To my soul's gaze I hold each fault of me,
Until my pride is lost in abject terror,
Lest I become inadequate to thee.

Like some swift-rushing and sea-seeking river,
Which gathers force the farther on it goes,
So does the current of my love forever
Find added strength and beauty as it flows.
The more I give, the more remains for giving,
The more receive, the more remains to win.
Ah! only in eternities of living
Will life be long enough to love thee in.

THE ETERNAL WILL



HERE is no thing we cannot overcome.
Say not thy evil instinct is inherited,
Or that some trait inborn makes thy whole life forlorn,
And calls down punishment that is not merited.

Back of thy parents and grandparents lies
The Great Eternal Will. That, too, is thine
Inheritance; strong, beautiful, divine,
Sure lever of success for one who tries.

Pry up thy faults with this great lever, Will.
However deeply bedded in propensity,
However firmly set, I tell thee firmer yet
Is that vast power that comes from Truth's immensity.

Thou art a part of that strange world, I say.
Its forces lie within thee, stronger far
Than all thy mortal sins and frailties are.
Believe thyself divine, and watch, and pray.

There is no noble height thou canst not climb.
All triumphs may be thine in Time's futurity,
If whatso'er thy fault, thou dost not faint or halt,
But lean upon the staff of God's security.

Earth has no claim the soul can not contest.
Know thyself part of that Eternal Source,
And naught can stand before thy spirit's force.
The soul's divine inheritance is best.

INSIGHT

N the river of life, as I float along,
I see with the spirit's sight
That many a nauseous weed of wrong
Has root in a seed of right.
For evil is good that has gone astray,
And sorrow is only blindness,
And the world is always under the sway
Of a changeless law of kindness.

The commonest error a truth can make
Is shouting its sweet voice hoarse,
And sin is only the soul's mistake
In misdirecting its force.
And love, the fairest of all fair things
That ever to man descended,
Grows rank with nettles and poisonous things
Unless it is watched and tended.

There could not be anything better than this
  Old world in the way it began;
And though some matters have gone amiss
  From the great original plan,
And however dark the skies may appear,
  And however souls may blunder,
I tell you it all will work out clear,
  For good lies over and under.

A WOMAN'S LOVE

O vast the tide of love within me surging,
It overflows like some stupendous sea,
The confines of the Present and To-be;
And 'gainst the Past's high wall I feel it urging,
As it would cry, "Thou, too, shalt yield to me!"

All other loves my supreme love embodies;
I would be she on whose soft bosom nursed
Thy clinging infant lips to quench their thirst;
She who trod close to hidden worlds where God is,
That she might have, and hold, and see thee first.

I would be she who stirred the vague, fond fancies
Of thy still childish heart; who through bright days
Went sporting with thee in the old-time plays,
And caught the sunlight of thy boyish glances
In half-forgotten and long-buried Mays.

Forth to the end, and back to the beginning,
My love would send its inundating tide,
Wherein all landmarks of thy past should hide.
If thy life's lesson *must* be learned through sinning,
My grieving virtue would become thy guide.

For I would share the burden of thy errors,
So when the sun of our brief life had set,
If thou didst walk in darkness and regret,
E'en in that shadowy world of nameless terrors,
My soul and thine should be companions yet.

And I would cross with thee those troubled oceans
Of dark remorse whose waters are despair:
All things my jealous, reckless love would dare,
So that thou mightst not recollect emotions
In which it did not have a part and share.

There is no limit to my love's full measure,
It's spirit-gold is shaped by earth's alloy;
I would be friend and mother, mate and toy,
I'd have thee look to me for every pleasure,
And in me find all memories of joy.

Yet though I love thee in such selfish fashion,
I would wait on thee, sitting at thy feet,
And serving thee, if thou didst deem it meet.
And couldst thou give me one fond hour of passion,
I'd take that hour and call my life complete.

THE PÆAN OF PEACE

ITH ever some wrong to be righting,
With self ever seeking for place,
The world has been striving and fighting
Since man was evolved out of space.

Bold history into dark regions
His torchlight has fearlessly cast,
He shows us tribes warring in legions,
In jungles of ages long passed.

Religion, forgetting her station,
Forgetting her birthright from God,
Set nation to warring with nation
And scattered dissension abroad.
Dear creeds have made men kill each other,
Fair faith has bred hate and despair,
And brother has battled with brother
Because of a difference in prayer.

But earth has grown wiser and kinder,
For man is evolving a soul:
From wars of an age that was blinder,
We rise to a peace-girdled goal.

Where once men would murder in treason
And slaughter each other in hordes,
They now meet together and reason,
With thoughts for their weapons, not swords

The brute in humanity dwindles
And lessens as time speeds along,
And the spark of Divinity kindles
And blazes up brightly and strong.
The seer can behold in the distance
The race that shall people the world—
Strong men of a godlike existence
Unarmed, and with war banners furled.

No longer the bloodthirsty savage
Man's vast spirit strength shall unfold;
And tales of red warfare and ravage
Shall seem like ghost stories of old.
For the booming of guns and the rattle
Of carnage and conflict shall cease,
And the bugle-call, leading to battle,
Shall change to a pæan of peace.

"HAS BEEN"

HAT melancholy phrase "It might have been,"
However sad, doth in its heart enfold
A hidden germ of promise! for I hold
Whatever might have been shall be.
Though in
Some other realm and life, the soul must win
The goal that erst was possible. But cold
And cruel as the sound of frozen mould
Dropped on a coffin, are the words "Has been."

"She has been beautiful"—"he has been great,"
"Rome has been powerful," we sigh and say.
It is the pitying crust we toss decay,
The dirge we breathe o'er some degenerate state,
An epitaph for fame's unburied dead.
God pity those who live to hear it said!

DUTY'S PATH

UT from the harbour of youth's bay
There leads the path of pleasure ;
With eager steps we walk that way
To brim joy's largest measure.
But when with morn's departing beam
Goes youth's last precious minute,
We sigh "'Twas but a fevered dream—
There's nothing in it."

Then on our vision dawns afar
The goal of glory, gleaming
Like some great radiant solar star,
And sets us longing, dreaming.
Forgetting all things left behind,
We strain each nerve to win it,
But when 'tis ours—alas ! we find
There's nothing in it.

We turn our sad, reluctant gaze
  Upon the path of duty ;
Its barren, uninviting ways
  Are void of bloom and beauty.
Yet in that road, though dark and cold
  It seems as we begin it,
As we press on—lo ! we behold
  There's Heaven in it.

MARCH

IKE some reformer, who with mien austere,
Neglected dress, and loud insistent tones,
More rasping than the wrongs which she bemoans,
Walks through the land and wearies all who hear,
While yet we know the need of such reform ;
So comes unlovely March, with wind and storm,
To break the spell of winter, and set free
The poisoned brooks and crocus beds oppressed.
Severe of face, gaunt-armed, and wildly dressed,
She is not fair nor beautiful to see.
But merry April and sweet smiling May
Come not till March has first prepared the way.

THE END OF THE SUMMER

HE birds laugh loud and long together
When Fashion's followers speed away
At the first cool breath of autumn weather.

Why, this is the time, cry the birds, to stay!
When the deep calm sea and the deep sky over
Both look their passion through sun-kissed space,
As a blue-eyed maid and her blue-eyed lover
Might each gaze into the other's face.

Oh! this is the time when careful spying
Discovers the secrets Nature knows.
You find when the butterflies plan for flying
(Before the thrush or the blackbird goes),
You see some day by the water's edges
A brilliant border of red and black;
And then off over the hills and hedges
It flutters away on the summer's track.

The shy little sumacs, in lonely places,
Bowed all summer with dust and heat,
Like clean-clad children with rain-washed faces,
Are dressed in scarlet from head to feet.
And never a flower had the boastful summer,
In all the blossoms that decked her sod,
So royal hued as that later comer
The purple chum of the goldenrod.

Some chill grey dawn you note with grieving
That the King of Autumn is on his way.
You see, with a sorrowful, slow believing,
How the wanton woods have gone astray.
They wear the stain of bold caresses,
Of riotous revels with old King Frost;
They dazzle all eyes with their gorgeous dresses,
Nor care that their green young leaves are lost.

A wet wind blows from the East one morning,
The wood's gay garments looked draggled out.
You hear a sound, and your heart takes warning—
The birds are planning their winter route.
They wheel and settle and scold and wrangle,
Their tempers are ruffled, their voices loud;
Then *whirr*—and away in a feathered tangle,
To fade in the south like a passing cloud.

Envoi

A songless wood stripped bare of glory—
A sodden moor that is black and brown;
The year has finished its last love-story:
Oh! let us away to the gay bright town.

SUN SHADOWS

HERE never was success so nobly gained,
Or victory so free from selfish dross,
But in the winning some one had been pained
Or some one suffered loss.

There never was so nobly planned a fête,
Or festal throng with hearts on pleasure bent,
But some neglected one outside the gate
Wept tears of discontent.

There never was a bridal morning fair
With hope's blue skies and love's unclouded sun
For two fond hearts, that did not bring despair
To some sad other one.

"HE THAT LOOKETH"

EA, she and I have broken God's command,
And in His sight are branded with our shame.
And yet I do not even know her name,
Nor ever in my life have touched her hand
Or brushed her garments. But I chanced to stand
Beside her in the throng! A sweet, swift flame
Shot from her flesh to mine—and hers the blame
Of willing looks that fed it; aye, that fanned
The glow within me to a hungry fire.
There was an invitation in her eyes.
Had she met mine with coldness or surprise,
I had not plunged on headlong in the mire
Of amorous thought. The flame leaped high and higher;
Her breath and mine pulsated into sighs,
And soft glance melted into glance kiss-wise,
And in God's sight both yielded to desire.

AN ERRING WOMAN'S LOVE

PART I

HE was a light and wanton maid:
Not one whom fickle Love betrayed,
For indolence was her undoer.
Fair, frivolous, and very poor,
She scorned the thought of toil, in youth,
And chose the path that leads from truth.

More women fall from want of gold
Than love leads wrong, if truth were told;
More women sin for gay attire
Than sin through passion's blinding fire.
Her god was gold: and gold she saw
Prove mightier than the sternest law
With judge and jury, priest and king;
So, made herself an offering
At Mammon's shrine; and lived for power,
And ease, and pleasures of the hour.

Who looks beneath life's outer crust
Is satisfied that God is just;
Who looks not under, but about,
Finds much to make him sad with doubt.
For Virtue walks with feet worn bare,
While Sin rides by with coach and pair:
Men praise the modest heart and chaste,
And yet they let it go to waste,
And follow, fierce to have and hold,
Some creature, wanton, selfish, bold.

She saw but this, life's outer side,
No higher faith was hers to guide;
She worshipped gold, and hated toil,
And hence her youth with all its soil,
With all its sins too dark to name,
Of secret crimes and public shame,
With all its trail of broken lives,
Of ruined homes, neglected wives,
And weeping mothers. Proud and gay
She went her devastating way
With untouched brow and fadeless grace.

Not time, but feeling, marks the face.
Sin on the outer being tells
Not till the startled soul rebels:

And she felt nothing but content.
She was too light and indolent
To worry over days to come.
This little earth held all life's sum,
She thought, and to be young and fair,
Well clothed, well fed, was all her care.
With pitying eyes and lifted head
She gazed on those who toiled for bread,
And laughed to scorn the talk she heard
Of punishment for those who erred,
And virtue's certain recompense.
She seemed devoid of moral sense,
An ignorant thing whose appetites
Bound her horizon of delights.

Men were her puppets to control;
Unconscious of a heart or soul
She lived, and gloried in the ease
She purchased by her power to please
The eye and senses. Life's one woe
Which caused her pitying tears to flow
Was poverty. Though hearts might break
And homes be ruined for her sake,
She showed no mercy. But when need
Of gold she saw, her heart would bleed.
The lack of clothing, fire, and food
Was earth's one pain, she understood.

The suffering poor oft blest her name,
Nor questioned whence the ducats came,
She gave so freely. Once she found
A fainting woman on the ground,
A wailing child clasped to her breast.
With her own hands she bathed and dressed
The weary waifs! gave food and gold
And clothed them warmly from the cold,
Nor guessed that one she lured from home
Had caused that suffering pair to roam
Unhoused, neglected. Then one day,
Unheralded across her way,
The conqueror came. She knew not why,
But with the first glance of his eye
A feeling, new and unexplained,
Woke in her what she oft had feigned.
And when his arm stole near her waist,
As startled maidens blush with chaste
Sweet fear at love's advances, so
She blushed from brow to breast of snow.
Strange, new emotions, fraught with joy
And pain commingled, made her coy;
But when he would have clasped her neck
With gems that might a queen bedeck
And offered gold, her lips grew white
With sudden anger at the sight

Of what had been her god for years.
She flung them from her. Then such tears
As only spring from love's despair
Welled from her eyes. "So, lady fair,
My gifts are scorned?" quoth he, and laughed.
"Like Cleopatra, you have quaffed
Such lordly pearls in draughts of wine,
You spurn poor simple gems like mine.
Well, well, fair queen, I'll bring to you
A richer gift next time. Adieu."

His light words stung like lash of whip;
With gasping breath and ashen lip
She strove to speak, but he was gone.
She kneeled and pressed her mouth upon
The latch his hand had touched, the floor
His foot had trod, and o'er and o'er
She sobbed his name, as children moan
A mother's name when left alone.

Out from the dim and roseate gloom
And subtle odours of her room
Accusing memories rose. She felt
A loneliness that seemed to belt
The universe in its embrace.
It was as if from some high place

A giant hand had reached and hurled
To nothingness her petty world,
And left her staring, awed, alone,
Up into regions vast, unknown.
There is no other loneliness
That can so sadden and oppress
As when beside the burned-out fire
Of sated passion and desire
The wakening spirit, in a glance,
Beholds its lost inheritance.
She rose and turned the dim lights higher,
Brought forth rich gems and grand attire,
And robed herself in feverish haste;
Before the mirror posed and paced,
With jewels on her breast and wrists;
Then sudden clenched her little fists
And beat her face until it bled,
And tore her garments shred from shred,
Gazed in the mirror, spoke her name
And hissed a word that told her shame,
Then on her knees fell sobbing there.

There are sweet messengers of prayer
Who down through space on soft wings steal,
And offer aid to all who kneel.
Her lips, unused to pious phrase,
Recalled some words of bygone days,

And "Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,"
She whispered timidly, and then,
"Lord, let me be a child again
And grow up good." The strange prayer said,
Like some o'er-weary child, her head
She pillowed on her arm, and wept
Low, shuddering sobs, until she slept
And dreamed; and in that dream she thought
She sat within a vine-wreathed cot;
An infant slumbered on her breast,
She crooned a lullaby, and pressed
Its waxen hand against her cheek,
While one, too proud and fond to speak,
The happy father of the child,
Stood near, and gazing on them, smiled.

She woke while still the lullaby
Was on her lips—then such a cry,
As souls in fabled realms below
Might utter, voiced her awful woe.

The mighty moral labour-pain
Of new-born conscience wracked her brain
And tore her soul. She understood
The meaning now of womanhood,

And chastity, and o'er her came
The full, dark sense of all her shame.
As some poor drunken wretch, at night,
Wakes up to know his piteous plight,
And sees, while sinking in the mire,
Afar, his waiting hearth-light's fire;
So now she saw from depths of sin
The hearth-light of the might-have-been.
How beautiful, how like a star
That lost light shone, but ah, how far!

She reached her longing arms toward space,
And lifted up her tear-wet face.
"O God," she wailed, "I have been bad!
I see it all, and I am sad,
And long to be a good girl now.
Lord, Lord, will some one show me how?
Why, men have trod the burning track
Of sin for years, and then gone back!
And cannot I for sin atone,
Or did Christ die for men alone?
I want to lead an honest life,
I want to be his own true wife
And hold upon my breast his child."
Then suddenly her voice grew wild,
"No, no," she cried, "it could not be—
Those infant eyes would torture me:

Though God condoned my sinful ways,
I could not meet my child's pure gaze."

She hid her face upon her knees,
And swayed as reeds sway in a breeze.
"O Christ," she moaned, "could I forget,
There might be something for me yet:
But though both God and man forgave,
And I should win the love I crave,
Why, memory would drive me mad."

When woman drifts from good to bad,
To make her final fall complete,
She puts her soul beneath her feet.
Man's dual selves seem separate;
He leaves his soul outside sin's gate,
And finds it waiting when he tires
Of carnal pleasures and desires,
Depleted, sickened, and depressed,
As souls must be with such a test,
Yet strong enough to help him grope
Back into happiness and hope.
But woman, far more complicate,
Can take take no chances with her fate;
A subtle creature, finely spun,
Her body and her soul are one.

And now this erring woman wept
The soul she murdered while it slept.
She felt too stunned with pain to think.
She seemed to stand upon a brink;
Behind her loomed the sinful past,
Below her, rocks, beyond her, vast
And awful darkness. Not one ray
Of sun or star to show the way!
She drew a long and shuddering breath;
"There is no other path but death
For me to tread," she sighed, "and so
I will prepare my house and go."

As housewives move with willing feet
And skilful hands to make things neat
And ready for some welcome one,
She toiled until her tasks were done.
Then, seated at her desk, she wrote,
With painful care, a tear-wet note.
The childish penmanship was rude,
Ill spelled the words, the phrasing crude;
Yet thought and feeling both were there,
And mighty love and great despair.
"Dear heart," it ran, "you did not know
How, from the first, I loved you so,
That sin grew hateful in my sight;
And so I leave it all to-night.

The kiss I gave, dear heart, to you
Was love's first kiss, as pure and true
As ever lips of maiden gave.
I think 'twill warm my lonely grave,
And light the pathway I must tread
Among the hapless, homeless dead.

"When God formed worlds, He failed to make
A path for erring feet to take
Back into light and peace again,
Unless they were the feet of men.
When woman errs, and then regrets,
Her sun of hope for ever sets,
And life is hung with deepest gloom.
In all the world there is no room
For such as she; and so I hold
That death itself is not so cold
As life has seemed, since by love's light
I saw there was a wrong and right,
And that my birthright had been sold,
By my own hands, for tarnished gold.
I hated labour, hence I fell;
But now I love you, dear, so well,
No greater boon my soul could crave
Than just to toil, a galley-slave,
Through burdened years and years of life,
If at the last you called me wife

For one supreme and honoured hour.
Alas! too late I learn love's power,
Too late I realise my loss,
And have no strength to bear my cross
Of loneliness and dark disgrace.
There cannot be another place
So desolate, so full of fear,
As earth to me, without you, dear.

"You will not understand, I know,
How one like me can love you so.
It was a strange, strange thing. Love came
So like a swift, devouring flame
And burned my frail, fair-weather boat
And left me on the waves afloat,
With nothing but a broken spar.
The distant shores seem very far;
I cannot reach them, so I sink.
God will forgive my sins, I think,
Because I die for love, like One
The good Book tells about, His Son.

"For erring woman death can bring
No pain so keen as memory's sting.
Good-night, good-bye. God bless you, dear,
And give you love, and joy, and cheer!

But sometimes, in the dark night, say
A prayer for one who went astray,
And found no pathway back, and died
For love of you—a suicide."

When morn his glorious pinions spread,
They found the erring woman, dead.

Part II

She woke as one wakes from a deep
And dreamless, yet exhausting, sleep.

A strange confusion filled her mind,
And sorrows vague and undefined,

Like half-remembered faces pressed
To memory's window, in her breast,

Gazed at her with reproachful eyes.
She felt a sudden, dazed surprise,

Commingled with a sense of dread.
"I did but sleep—I am not dead,

"The potion and the purpose failed,
And I still live," she wildly wailed.

"Nay, thou art dead, rash suicide,"
A sad voice spake: and at her side

She saw a weird and shadowy crowd
With anguished lips, and shoulders bowed,

And orbs that seemed the wells of woe.
She shrieked and veiled her eyes. "No, no!

"I am not dead! I ache with life.
An earthly passion's hopeless strife

"Still tortures me." "Yet thou art dead,"
The voice with sad insistence said.

"But love and sorrow and regret
All die with death. *I* feel them yet."

"God bade thee live, and only He
Can say when thou shalt cease to be."

"But I was sin-sick, sad, alone—
I thought by death I could atone,

"And died that Christ might show me how."
"Christ bore His burden, why not thou?"

"Oh! lead me to His holy feet
And let my penance be complete."

"What! thinkest thou to find that path—
Thou who hast tempted Heaven's wrath

"By thy rash deed? Nay, nay, not so,
'Tis but perfected spirits go

"To that supreme and final goal.
A self-sought death delays the soul.

"With yonder shuddering, woeful throng
Of suicides thy ways belong.

"Close to the earth a shadowy band,
Unseen, but seeing all, they stand

"Until their natural time to die,
As God intended, shall draw nigh.

"On earth, repentant, sick of sin,
A ministering angel thou hadst been

"Whose patient toil and deeds divine
Had rescued souls as sad as thine,

"Each deed a firm ascending stair
To lead beyond thy great despair.

"But now it is thy mournful fate
To linger here and meditate

"On thy dark past—to stand so near
The earthly plane that thou canst hear

"Thy lover's voice, while old desire
Shall burn within thee like a fire,

"And grief shall root thee to the spot
To find how soon thou art forgot.

"But since thou hast endured the woes
That only fragile woman knows,

"And loved as only woman can,
Thou shalt not suffer all that man

"Must suffer when he interferes
With God's great law. In death's dim spheres

"That justice waits, which men refuse.
Thy sex shall in some part excuse

"Thy desperate deed. When God shall send
A second death to be thy friend,

"Thou need'st not fear a darker fate—
Go forth with yonder throng, and wait."

A SONG OF REPUBLICS

AIR Freedom's ship, too long adrift—
Of every wind the sport—
Now rigged and manned, her course well planned,
Sails proudly out of port;
And fluttering gaily from the mast
This motto is unfurled,
Let all men heed its truth who read:
"Republics rule the World!"

The universe is high as God!
Good is the final goal;
The world revolves and man evolves
A purpose and a soul.
No church can bind, no crown forbid
Thought's mighty upward course—
Let kings give way before its sway,
For God inspires its force.

The hero of a vanished age
Was one who bathed in gore;
Who best could fight was noblest knight
In savage days of yore;
Now warrior chiefs are out of date,
The times have changed. To-day
We call men great who arbitrate
And keep war's hounds at bay.

The world no longer looks to priest
Or prince to know its needs;
Earth's human throng has grown too strong
To rule with courts and creeds.
We want no kings but kings of toil—
No crowns but crowns of deeds;
Not royal birth but sterling worth
Must mark the man who leads.

Proud monarchies are out of step
With modern thought to-day,
For Brotherhood is understood,
And thrones may pass away.
Men dare to think. Concerted thought
Contains more power than swords:
The force that binds united minds
Defeats mere savage hordes.

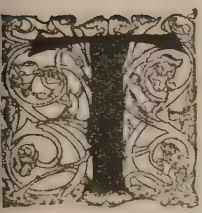
Man needs no arbitrary hand
To keep him in control;
He feels the power grow hour by hour
Of his expanding soul:
In God's stupendous scheme of worlds
He knows he has a place;
He is no slave to cringe, and crave
Some worthless monarch's grace.

As ocean billows undermine
The haughty shores each hour,
Time's sea has brought its waves of thought
To crumble thrones of power;
And one by one shall kingdoms fall
Like leaves before the blast,
As man with man combines to plan
Republics formed to last.

Columbia baulked a tyrant king,
And built upon a rock,
In Freedom's name, a shrine whose fame
Outlived the century's shock.
Now France within our port has set
Her symbol of re-birth;
Her lifted hand tells sea and land
Republics light the earth.

One mighty church for all the world
Would make men far more kind;
One government would bring content
To many a restless mind.
Sail on, fair ship of Freedom, sail
The wide sea's breadth and length.
'Till worlds unite to make the might
Of "One Republic's" strength.

MEMORIAL DAY—1892



HE quiet graves of our country's braves
Through thirty Junes and Decembers
Have solemnly lain under sun and rain,
And yet the Nation remembers.

The marching of feet and the flags on the street
Told once again this morning,
In the voice of the drum how the day had come
For those lowly beds' adorning.

Then swiftly back on Time's worn track
His three decades seemed driven,
And with startled eyes I saw arise,
From graves by fancy riven,

The Gray and Blue in a grand review.
Oh! vast were the hosts they numbered,
As they wheeled and swayed in a dress parade
O'er the graves where they long had slumbered.

The colours were not, as when they fought,
  Ranked one against the other,
But a mingled hue of gray and blue,
  As brother marching with brother.

And a blue flower lay on each coat of gray,
  Like forget-me-nots on a boulder;
And the gray moss lace in its Southern grace
  Was knotted on each blue shoulder.

The vision fled; but I think our dead,
  If they could come back with the living,
Would clasp warm hands o'er hostile lands,
  Forgetting old wrongs and forgiving.

'Mong the blossoms of Spring that you gather and bring
  To graves that though lowly are royal,
Let the blue flower prevail, though modest and pale,
  Since it speaks of the hue that was loyal.

But tie each bouquet with a ribbon of gray
  And lay it on memory's altar,
For the dead who fought for the cause they thought
  Was right, and who did not falter.

WHEN BABY SOULS SAIL OUT

HEN from our mortal vision
Grown men and women go
To sail strange fields Elysian
And know what spirits know,
I think of them as tourists,
In some sun-gilded clime,
'Mong happy sights and dear delights
We all shall find, in time.

But when a child goes yonder
And leaves its mother here,
Its little feet must wander,
It seems to me, in fear.
What paths of Eden beauty,
What scenes of peace and rest,
Can bring content to one who went
Forth from a mother's breast?

In palace gardens, lonely,
A little child will roam
And weep for pleasures only
Found in its humble home.

It is not won by splendour,
Nor bought by costly toys;
To hide from harm on mother's arm
Makes all its sum of joys.

It must be when the baby
Goes journeying off alone,
Some angel (Mary, may be)
Adopts it for her own.
Yet when a child is taken
Whose mother stays below,
With weeping eyes, through Paradise,
I seem to see it go.

With troops of angels trying
To drive away its fear,
I seem to hear it crying,
"I want my mamma here."
I do not court the fancy,
It is not based on doubt,
It is a thought that comes unsought
When baby souls sail out.

TO ANOTHER WOMAN'S BABY

LIST your prattle, baby boy,
And hear your pattering feet
With feelings more of pain than joy
And thoughts of bitter-sweet.

While touching your soft hands in play
Such passionate longings rise
For my wee boy who strayed away
So soon to Paradise.

You win me with your infant art;
But when our play is o'er,
The empty cradle in my heart
Seems lonelier than before.

Sweet baby boy, you do not guess
How oft mine eyes are dim,
Or that my lingering caress
Is sometimes meant for *him*.

DIAMONDS

HE tears of fallen women turned to ice
By man's cold pity for repentant vice.

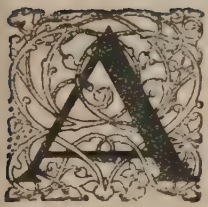
RUBIES

HE crimson life-drops from a virgin heart
Pierced to the core by Cupid's fatal dart.

SAPPHIRES

OST rays of light that wandered off alone
And down through space were hurled
From that great sapphire sun beyond our own
Pale, puny little world.

TURQUOISE



BABY went to heaven while it slept,
And, waking, missed its mother's arms, and wept.
Those angel tear-drops, falling earthward through
God's azure skies, into the turquoise grew.

REFORM

HE time has come when men with hearts and brains
Must rise and take the misdirected reins
Of government; too long left in the hands
Of aliens and of lackeys. He who stands
And sees the mighty vehicle of State
Hauled through the mire to some ignoble fate
And makes not such bold protest as he can,
Is no American.

A MINOR CHORD

HEARD a strain of music in the street—
A wandering waif of sound. And then straightway
A nameless desolation filled the day.
The great green earth that had been fair and sweet,
Seemed but a tomb; the life I thought replete
With joy, grew lonely for a vanished May.
Forgotten sorrows resurrected lay
Like bleaching skeletons about my feet.

Above me stretched the silent, suffering sky,
Dumb with vast anguish for departed suns
That brutal Time to nothingness has hurled.
The daylight was as sad as smiles that lie
Upon the wistful, unkissed mouths of nuns,
And I stood prisoned in an awful world.

DEATH'S PROTEST

HY dost thou shrink from my approach, O Man?
Why dost thou ever flee in fear, and cling
To my false rival, Life? I do but bring
Thee rest and calm. Then wherefore dost thou ban
And curse me? Since the forming of God's plan
I have not hurt or harmed a mortal thing,
I have bestowed sweet balm for every sting,
And peace eternal for earth's stormy span.

The wild mad prayers for comfort sent in vain
To knock at the indifferent heart of Life,
I, Death, have answered. Knowest thou not 'tis he,
My cruel rival, who sends all thy pain
And wears the soul out in unending strife?
Why dost thou hold to him, then, spurning me?

SEPTEMBER

Y life's long radiant Summer halts at last,
And lo! beside my path way I behold
Pursuing Autumn glide: nor frost nor cold
Has heralded her presence; but a vast
Sweet calm that comes not till the year has passed
Its fevered solstice, and a tinge of gold
Subdues the vivid colouring of bold
And passion-hued emotions. I will cast

My August days behind me with my May,
Nor strive to drag them into Autumn's place,
Nor swear I hope when I do but remember.
Now violet and rose have had their day,
I'll pluck the soberer asters with good grace
And call September nothing but September.

WAIL OF AN OLD-TIMER

ACH new invention doubles our worries an' our troubles,
These scientific fellows are spoilin' of our land;
With motor, wire, an' cable, now'-days we're scarcely able
To walk or ride in peace o' mind, an' 'tisn't safe to stand.

It fairly makes me crazy to see how tarnal lazy
The risin' generation grows—an' science is to blame.
With telephones for talkin', an' messengers for walkin',
Our young men sit an' loaf an' smoke, without a blush o' shame.

An' then they wer'n't contented until some one invented
A sort o' jerky tape-line clock, to help on wasteful ways.
An' that infernal ticker spends money fur 'em quicker
Than any neighbourhood o' men in good old bygone days.

The risin' generation is bent so on creation,
Folks haven't time to talk or sing or cry or even laugh.
But if you take the notion to want some such emotion,
They've got it all on tap fur you, right in the phonograph.

But now a crazy creature has introduced the feature
Of artificial weather, I think we're nearly through.
For when we once go strainin' to keep it dry or rainin'
To suit the general public, 'twill bust the world in two.

WAS, IS, AND YET-TO-BE

AS, Is, and Yet-to-Be
Were chatting over a cup of tea.

In tarnished finery smelling of must,
Was talked of people long turned to dust;

Of titles and honours and high estate,
All forgotten or out of date;

Of wonderful feasts in the long ago,
Of pride that perished with nothing to show.

'I loathe the present," said Was, with a groan;
"I live in pleasures that I *have* known."

The Yet-to-be, in a gown of gauze,
Looked over the head of musty Was,

And gazed far off into misty space
With a wrapt expression upon her face.

"Such wonderful pleasures are coming to me,
Such glory, such honour," said Yet-to-be.

"No one dreamed, in the vast Has-Been,
Of such successes as I shall win.

"The past, the present—why, what are they?
I live for the joy of a future day."

Then practical Is, in a fresh print dress,
Spoke up with a laugh, "I must confess

"I find to-day so pleasant," she said,
"I never look back, and seldom ahead.

"Whatever has been, is a finished sum;
Whatever will be—why, let it come.

"To-day is mine. And so, you see,
I have the past and the yet-to-be;

"For to-day is the future of yesterday,
And the past of to-morrow. I live while I may,

"And I think the secret of pleasure is this,
And this alone," said practical Is.

MISTAKES

OD sent us here to make mistakes,
To strive, to fail, to re-begin,
To taste the tempting fruit of sin,
And find what bitter food it makes.

To miss the path, to go astray,
To wander blindly in the night;
But, searching, praying for the light,
Until at last we find the way.

And looking back along the past,
We know we needed all the strain
Of fear and doubt and strife and pain
To make us value peace, at last.

Who fails, finds later triumph sweet;
Who stumbles once, walks then with care,
And knows the place to cry "Beware"
To other unaccustomed feet.

Through strife the slumbering soul awakes,
We learn on error's troubled route
The truths we could not prize without
The sorrow of our sad mistakes.

DUAL

OU say that your nature is double; that life
Seems more and more intricate, complex, and dual,
Because in your bosom there wages the strife
'Twixt an angel of light and a beast that is cruel—
An angel who whispers your spirit has wings,
And a beast who would chain you to temporal things.

I listen with interest to all you have told,
And now let me give you my view of your trouble:
You are to be envied, not pitied; I hold
That every strong nature is always made double.
The beast has his purpose; he need not be slain:
He should serve the good angel in harness and chain.

The body that never knows carnal desires,
The heart that to passion is always a stranger,
Is merely a furnace with unlighted fires;
It sends forth no warmth while it threatens no danger
But who wants to shiver in cold safety there?
Touch flame to the fuel! then watch it with care.

Those wild, fierce emotions that trouble your soul
  Are sparks from the great source of passion and power;
Throne reason above them, and give it control,
  And turn into blessing this dangerous dower.
By lightnings unguided destruction is hurled,
But chained and directed they gladden the world.

THE ALL-CREATIVE SPARK

AIN can go guised as joy, dross pass for gold,
Vulgarity can masquerade as wit,
Or spite wear friendship's garments; but I hold
That passionate feeling has no counterfeit.
Chief jewel from Jove's crown 'twas sent men, lent
For inspiration and for sacrament.

Jove never could have made the Universe
Had he not glowed with passion's sacred fire;
Though man oft turns the blessing to a curse,
And burns himself on his own funeral pyre,
Though scarred the soul be where its light burns bright,
Yet where it is not, neither is there might.

Yea, it was set in Jove's resplendent crown
When he created worlds; that done, why, hence,
He cast the priceless, awful jewel down
To be man's punishment and recompense.
And that is how he sees and hears our tears
Unmoved and calm from the eternal spheres.

But sometimes, since he parted with all passion,
In trifling mood, to pass the time away,
He has created men in that same fashion,
And many women (jesting as gods may),
Who have no souls to be inspired or fired,
Mere sport of idle gods who have grown tired.

And these poor puppets, gazing in the dark
At their own shadows, think the world no higher;
And when they see the all-creative spark
In other souls, they straightway cry out, "Fire!"
And shriek, and rave, till their dissent is spent,
While listening gods laugh loud in merriment.

BE NOT CONTENT

E not content—contentment means
inaction;
The growing soul aches on its
upward quest;
Satiety is twin to satisfaction;
All great achievements spring
from life's unrest.

The tiny roots, deep in the dark mould hiding,
Would never bless the earth with leaf and flower
Were not an inborn restlessness abiding
In seed and germ, to stir them with its power.

Were man contented with his lot forever,
He had not sought strange seas with sails unfurled,
And the vast wonder of our shores had never
Dawned on the gaze of an admiring world.

Prize what is yours, but be not quite contented.
  There is a healthful restlessness of soul
By which a mighty purpose is augmented
  In urging men to reach a higher goal.

So when the restless impulse rises, driving
  Your calm content before it, do not grieve;
It is the upward reaching of the spirit
  Of the God in you to achieve—achieve.

ACTION

OR ever stars are winging
Their swift and endless race;
For ever suns are swinging
Their mighty globes through space.
Since by his law required
To join God's spheres inspired,
The earth has never tired,
But whirled and whirled and whirled.
For ever streams are flowing,
For ever seeds are growing,
Alway is Nature showing
That Action rules the world.

And since by God requested
To *be*, the glorious light
Has never paused or rested,
But travelled day and night.
Yet pigmy man, unseeing
The purpose of his being,
Demands escape and freeing
From universal force.
But law is law for ever,
And like a mighty lever
It thrusts him tow'rd endeavour,
And speeds him on his course.

TWO ROSES

HUMBLE wild-rose, pink and slender,
Was plucked and placed in a bright bouquet,
Beside a Jacqueminot's royal splendour,
And both in my lady's boudoir lay.

Said the haughty bud, in a tone of scorning,
"I wonder why you are called a rose?
Your leaves will fade in a single morning;
No blood of mine in your pale cheek glows.

"Your coarse green stalk shows dust of the highway,
You have no depths of fragrant bloom;
And what could you learn in a rustic byway
To fit you to lie in my lady's room?

"If called to adorn her warm, white bosom,
What have you to offer for such a place,
Beside my fragrant and splendid blossom,
Ripe with colour and rich with grace?"

Said the sweet wild-rose, "Despite your dower
Of finer breeding and deeper hue,
Despite your beauty, fair, high-bred flower,
It is I who should lie on her breast, not you.

"For small account is your hot-house glory
Beside the knowledge that came to me
When I heard by the wayside love's old story,
And felt the kiss of the amorous bee."

SATIETY

O yearn for what we have not had,
to sit
With hungry eyes glued on the
Future's gate,
Why, that is heaven compared to
having it
With all the power gone to appreciate.

Better to wait and yearn, and still to wait,
And die at last with unappeased desire,
Than live to be the jest of such a fate,
For that is my conception of hell-fire.

A SOLAR ECLIPSE

N that great journey of the stars through space
About the mighty, all-directing Sun,
The pallid, faithful Moon has been the one
Companion of the Earth. Her tender face,
Pale with the swift, keen purpose of that race
Which at Time's natal hour was first begun,
Shines ever on her lover as they run
And lights his orbit with her silvery smile.

Sometimes such passionate love doth in her rise,
Down from her beaten path she softly slips,
And with her mantle veils the Sun's bold eyes,
Then in the gloaming finds her lover's lips.
While far and near the men our world call wise
See only that the Sun is in eclipse.

A SUGGESTION

To C. A. D.

LET the wild red-rose bloom. Though not to thee
So delicately perfect as the white
And unwed lily drooping in the light,
Though she has known the kisses of the bee
And tells her amorous tale to passers-by
In perfumed whispers and with untaught grace,
Still let the red-rose bloom in her own place;
She could not be the lily should she try.

Why to the wondrous nightingale cry hush
Or bid her cease her wild heart-breaking lay,
And tune her voice to imitate the way
The whip-poor-will makes music, or the thrush?
All airs of sorrow to one theme belong,
And passion is not copyrighted yet.
Each heart writes its own music. Why not let
The nightingale unchided sing her song?

THE DEPTHS

OT only sun-kissed heights are fair.
Below
The cold, dark billows of the frowning deep
Do lovely blossoms of the ocean sleep,
Rocked gently by the waters to and fro.
The coral beds with magic colours glow.
And priceless pearl-encrusted molluscs heap
The glittering rocks where shining atoms leap
Like living broken rainbows.

Even so
We find the sea of sorrow. Black as night
The sullen surface meets our frightened gaze,
As down we sink to darkness and despair.
But at the depths—such beauty! such delight!
Such flowers as never grew in pleasure's ways!
Ah! not alone are sun-kissed summits fair.

LIFE'S OPERA

IKE an opera-house is the world, l
ween,
Where the passionate lover of music
is seen
In the balcony near the roof:
While the very best seat in the first
stage-box
Is filled by the person who laughs and talks
Through the harmony's warp and woof.

THE SALT SEA-WIND

HEN Venus, mother and maker of blisses,
Rose out of the billows, large-limbed, and fair,
She stood on the sands and blew sweet kisses
To the salt sea-wind as she dried her hair.

And the salt sea-wind was the first to caress her
To praise her beauty and call her sweet,
The first of the whole wide world to possess her,
She, that creature of light and heat.

Though the sea is old with its sorrows and angers,
And the world has forgotten why love was born,
Yet the salt sea-wind is full of the languors
That Venus taught on her natal morn.

And now whoever dwells there by the ocean,
And feels the wind on his hair and face,
Is stirred by a subtle and keen emotion,
The lingering spell of that first embrace.

NEW YEAR

EW YEAR, I look straight in your eyes—
Our ways and our interests blend;
You may be a foe in disguise,
But I shall believe you a friend.
We get what we give in our measure,
We cannot give pain and get pleasure;
I give you good will and good cheer,
And you must return it, New Year.

We get what we give in this life,
Though often the giver indeed
Waits long upon doubting and strife
Ere proving the truth of my creed.
But somewhere, some way, and for ever
Reward is the meed of endeavour;
And if I am really worth while,
New Year, you will give me your smile.

You hide in your mystical hand
No "luck" that I cannot control,
If I trust my own courage and stand
On the Infinite strength of my soul.
Man holds in his brain and his spirit
A power that is God-like, or near it,
And he who has measured his force
Can govern events and their course.

You come with a crown on your brow,
New Year, without blemish or spot;
Yet you, and not I, sir, must bow,
For time is the servant of thought
Whatever you bring me of trouble
Shall turn into good, and then double,
If my spirit looks up without fear
To the Source that you came from, New Year.

CONCENTRATION

HE age is too diffusive. Time and Force
Are frittered out and bring no satisfaction.
The way seems lost to straight determined action.
Like shooting stars that zig-zag from their course
We wander from our orbit's pathway; spoil
The rôle we're fitted for, to fail in twenty.
Bring empty measures, that were shaped for plenty,
At last as guerdon for a life of toil.
There's lack of greatness in this generation
Because no more man centres on one thought.
We know this truth, and yet we heed it not:
The secret of success is Concentration.

THOUGHTS

HOUGHTS do not need the wings of
words
To fly to any goal.
Like subtle lightnings, not like birds,
They speed from soul to soul.

Hide in your heart a bitter thought—
Still it has power to blight;
Think Love—although you speak it not,
It gives the world more light.

LUCK

UCK is the tuning of our inmo
thought
To chord with God's great pla
That done, ah! know,
Thy silent wishes to results sh
grow,
And day by day shall miracles be wrought.
Once let thy being selflessly be brought
To chime with universal good, and lo!
What music from the spheres shall through thee flo
What benefits shall come to thee unsought!

Shut out the noise of traffic! Rise above
The body's clamour! With the soul's fine ear
Attune thyself to harmonies divine—
All, all are written in the key of Love.
Keep to the score, and thou hast naught to fear;
Achievements yet undreamed of shall be thine.

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